Doubletalk

TOM

Vol. 1, No. 2 The newsletter of The Friends of Tom and Colin Baker September 1987

What's Up

With regard to future work, Tom says "nothing is fixed." He was offered a role in a pantomime but refused it because he doesn't want to be away from home at Christmas.

He reports that "At the moment I'm reading Charles Dickens and rereading old familiar ones. At Christmas I'm doing a reading of *A Christmas Carol* in the local church." (He read the lesson in church last Christmas and afterwards reported, "I adored it!")

Population Rising . . .

An April newspaper interview reported that Tom's "main love outside the theatre is cats. 'I am besotted with them and I have seven Burmese cats at home. When I go down to the post office, they follow me in line and look a lovely sight with their tails sticking straight up in the air.' "

We reported last time that two of Tom's cats were pregnant. "Brenda is enormous and should deliver about 16th September. Garbo had one kitten and it died, so I've had her mated again with a lilac Burmese. We intend to keep three or four."

Late for the Train!

Some people who have seen *An Inspector Calls* have questioned why Tom dashes from the theatre as soon as the last performance ends. Here is Tom's explanation: "My rushing away from the theatre is not mysterious--I have a car waiting to get me to the station for my train. It's a close thing if I don't leave within 3 minutes." Tom used to take his time and catch a later train, but that meant he didn't get home until almost 1 a.m.--something which, we submit, one would find a bit tiresome after several months...

© 1987 Sheila Burnett (Tom as the Inspector in *An Inspector Calls*)

The Inspector's Still Calling . . .

Tom reports that *An Inspector Calls* "will definitely finish on the 31st of October."

Tom's performance as the Inspector is impressive, and many Americans who have seen the play have reported that they enjoyed it very much and would love to be able to see it again. The play isn't as ceaselessly serious as some of us expected after reading it; in performance it intentionally draws a few laughs. Tom delivers several of his amazing shark-like grins to good effect, and proves equally capable of shocking the audience by the realism of his anger when the Inspector finally loses his temper with the Birling family. The supernatural overtones of the play are very much in evidence, for Tom's portrayal of other-worldliness is as masterful as ever!

Arthur and the WHAT??

Thanks to member Judy Harris we've just learned that one of Tom's most delightful audio recordings, *Arthur and the Bellybutton Diamond*, is still available for purchase. We reviewed this recording two years ago (in the June 1985 issue of *Among Friends*), but for the benefit of those who have joined the club since then the following notes, taken from the back of the box in which the cassette is packaged, will give you a good idea of the flavor of this 1983 recording: "A green, grassy fog hangs over Victorian London concealing strange men and strange crimes! So strange, in fact, that even the great Sherlock Holmes is at his wits' end struggling to answer a hundred mind-boggling questions--Where is the belly-button of the great god Dennis? Who is the Burglar With No Feet? Why are the Midget Swatties bent on terrible revenge? What has happened to Dr. Watson's kidneys? But fortunately for the great detective, a small boy lives upstairs. His name is Arthur..."

Ordering individual copies would be quite expensive, but by placing a group order for the tapes we will be able to purchase them at the wholesale price and also save on postage. If you would like a copy of this tape, send a check/money order (payable to FTCB) for $7.50 (including postage) to us by November 2nd (firm). On November 3rd we'll tally the orders, obtain the required international bank draft, and place our order for the requested number of copies. You should (barring unexpected delays) receive your tape(s) from us by mid-December.

If you prefer to contact the distributor directly, the address is: The Talking Tape Company, 186 Fulham Road, London SW10.

Mail...Mail...Mail...Mail...Mail...

Tom receives so much mail that it must be handled by his agent's office. We print their address because it's the only one available, but please understand we can't guarantee that your mail will reach Tom or that you will receive an acknowledgment. The address is: London Management, 235/241 Regent St., London W1A 2JT.

Tom appreciates everyone's letters and is sorry that he's unable to personally respond to more than a tiny fraction of them. "Would you thank all the people who write and send me best wishes."

Doctor Who: The Videotapes

Four of Tom's *Doctor Who* episodes (*Pyramids of Mars*, *Brain of Morbius*, *Robots of Death*, and *Revenge of the Cybermen*) have been released on videotape in the U.S. by Playhouse Video, a division of CBS/Fox Video. We've heard that *Terror of the Zygons* will also be released soon.

If you have trouble finding the tapes, the following mail-order source usually has them in stock in VHS, and can get them in Beta: Mr. Dickens Books and Tapes, 5323-A Elkhorn Blvd., Sacramento, CA 95842. Their price is $19.95/tape plus $2.00/tape for shipping via UPS, and 6% sales tax for California residents. (Thanks to members Marilyn Silva and Kathy Starnes for the above information.)

Praise a la PBS

The following letter appeared in the September program guides of many PBS stations around the country. (Thanks to members Kay Dotson and Sheila Alpers for sending it to us.)

Brit Rep Postscript

Your tips on British theater ["British Rep: On Holiday in the U.K.," July] were a good idea. There's more to be said, however. We have just returned from London with memories of impressive performances by Francesca Annis (*Partners in Crime*) in *Three Sisters* and Tom Baker (*Doctor Who*) in *An Inspector Calls*.

Richard H. Neeld
Menemsha, Massachusetts

PUZZLED: The crossword puzzle in the August 15th issue of *TV Guide* contained the clue (41 down): "Tom Baker played this Doctor"!

Compliments of Yorkshire Television (from *The Book Tower*)

The Strongbox

by Carl Sternheim

(translated by Maurice Edwards and Valerie Reich)

Photo research conducted by member Joanne Walsh has amazingly turned up photos from several plays in which Tom appeared at the Scarborough Library Theatre in 1968. The photos on this page are from *The Strongbox*, which opened on July 18, 1968. Tom played a character called Alphonse Silkenhand, and his performance was reviewed thusly: "Tom Baker as the photographer has a prodigious part and his antics, his florid speech, his foppish and extravagant mannerisms are a joy to watch."

(All photos on this page © 1968 Ken Boden. Thanks from all of us, Ken!)

Doubletalk

Colin

Vol. 1, No. 2 The newsletter of The Friends of Tom and Colin Baker September 1987

© 1987 Ken Towner, London Evening Standard (Colin as Evelyn Farrant in *Corpse!*)

Excerpted from the *Corpse!* program: "CORPSING" according to the Oxford English Dictionary is theatre slang for the act of 'confusing or putting out an actor in the performance of his part.' This antic is a practice not usually noticed by audiences but some actors find the urge to corpse their colleagues irresistible.

Corpse! Alive and Well in the West End

Colin reports that the West End run of *Corpse!* is going extremely well and that it will continue through October 31st.

In our last issue Colin explained that the early performances of the play were plagued by mechanical difficulties. At least one amusing error has occurred in the dialogue, as well, and while it wasn't Colin's fault it seems worth poking a tiny bit of fun at, considering his well-deserved reputation for thinking quickly on his feet...

At the beginning of Act II, Major Powell (Jack Watling) is supposed to ask one of the twins who his favorite artist is, in the (mistaken) belief that the response (which is supposed to be "Artist? Van Gogh. Manet.") will indicate which one of the twins he's talking to. During one of the performances in Cambridge, however, Jack unexpectedly asked Colin, "What are your favorite *paintings*?"--which of course called for quite a different sort of answer!

Colin darted a brief, surprised look at Jack, but his response was virtually instantaneous: "Paintings? *Mona Lisa*." Unfortunately that didn't have much to do with Van Gogh or Manet, however, so the whole point of the exchange was lost! Afterwards Colin explained that it was the only painting he'd been able to think of during the split second at his disposal. "Why couldn't I have thought of *Sunflowers* or something!"

Like many other club members who have recently traveled to England, Mindy DeLapp and her husband report that they thoroughly enjoyed both Tom's and Colin's plays. "We were amazed at the skill, speed and energy it takes for Colin to make all those costume and character changes! We asked him how he managed it so quickly and he replied, 'Velcro!' "

Shoppe Talk

Dear Friends,

Thanks for all of your compliments on the first issue of *Doubletalk*! The idea for the new upside-down format which many of you have said you like was suggested by member Loretta Forte, who also helps me prepare the newsletters for mailing. Thanks, Loretta!

FTCB/TFOTB is now four years old, and it's gratifying to look through the membership list and see how long some of you have been with us (i.e., many since the beginning). Thanks so much for sticking with us!

I'd also like to express my gratitude to Gail Bennett, Patricia Davis, Jan Grokett and Beth Holbrooke for their continued support; to Joanne Walsh for obtaining more fabulous photos for us; and last but not least to my local "gang" -- including Lorenia Butler, Loretta Forte, Shirley Gerber, Gloria Sipido, Pat Smith and Debra Spaulding--for just putting up with me in general!

Recent advertisements and "plugs" in various convention guides and newsletters have informed quite a few people about our "regenerated" club, but it would help if each of you would spread the word to everyone you know who might be interested--especially fans of Colin's, since there are undoubtedly many who are unaware that there's now a club for him. Thanks!

PLEASE NOTE: Between the usual holiday shopping, partying and travel, I was unable to finish putting last December's issue together before Christmas. That situation is likely to be repeated this year, so I thought I'd prepare you ahead of time for the possibility that the next issue may not get into the mail until early January.

That's about it for now, so I'm going to retreat to my lair and try to get used to the idea that I'm now running a fan club for *two* sex symbols.... (See next page for explanation, if you're not already aware of what I'm talking about!)

Laurie

Convention News

Subject to professional commitments Colin is confirmed to attend **Magnum Opus Con 3**, March 25-27, 1988, in Columbus, Georgia. For information send an SASE to MOC 3; 4315 Pio Nono Avenue; Macon, GA 31206.

Last time we mentioned that Colin would attend **Ode to the Time Lord and Master** in Washington, DC, September 19-20. That event has been rescheduled for January 9-10, 1988, but Colin will be unable to attend because he'll be appearing in *Robinson Crusoe*.

Mail...Mail...Mail...Mail...Mail...

Since 1983 when he was chosen to be the Sixth Doctor, Colin has received a tremendous amount of mail. He has eventually managed to answer almost everything sent to him, though it has sometimes taken a while and he has not always been able to answer as completely as he would have liked.

Because of increased demands upon his time as he accepts new roles and becomes involved in new projects, Colin is afraid that he will have less and less time to devote to answering his mail, and he's concerned that he may no longer be able to respond to all of the questions and comments of everyone who writes to him in future.

So that we'll be able to continue to get to know him better, Colin has agreed to participate in a question-and-answer column here in the newsletter. If any of you have questions you'd like to ask him please send them to us, and depending upon how many we receive each quarter we'll either send all of them to Colin or select a few which seem to be of the greatest general interest. (If your question isn't answered in the newsletter, it will be because there wasn't enough room to print all of the questions that we received.)

If you want to write directly to Colin despite the fact that he may not be able to reply, here's his address:

Colin Baker
Box 216
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire HP14 3PA
U.K.

THE FRIENDS OF TOM AND COLIN BAKER • P.O. Box 8363 • Stanford, California 94305-0217

Coordinator/Editor: Laurie Yadon

For membership dues of $10/year ($15/year overseas airmail) each member receives four issues of our quarterly newsletter, *DOUBLETALK*. Renewals are due by the last day of the month/year on your mailing label. Unless otherwise noted, checks/money orders for all memberships and merchandise should be payable to The Friends of Tom and Colin Baker. When writing to request information, please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Grounds for termination of membership include (but are not limited to) nonpayment of dues, conduct which might tend to misrepresent the club, unauthorized use of the club name, and unauthorized reproduction of club materials. All material in the newsletter is copyright to the author/artist and copyright reverts upon publication.

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BACK ISSUES of the newsletter are available for $1.50 each, including postage. All issues are available; if original copies are out of stock we'll send photocopies. *AMONG FRIENDS* (newsletter of The Friends of Tom Baker): Vol. 1 #1 (9/83), #2 (12/83), #3 (3/84), #4 (6/84); Vol. 2 #1 (9/84), #2 (12/84), #3 (3/85), #4 (6/85); Vol. 3 #1 (9/85), #2 (12/85), #3 (3/86), #4 (6/86); Vol. 4 #1 (9/86), #2 (12/86), #3 (3/87). *DOUBLETALK*: Vol. 1 #1 (6/87).

© 1987 Ken Towner, *The London Evening Standard* (Colin as Evelyn Farrant in *Corpse!*)

Excerpts from some London reviews of *Corpse!*

"Colin Baker revels in the schizophrenic hurdles of being both devious, decadent Evelyn and stodgy, doomed Rupert." (*London Weekly Diary of Social Events*, August 2, 1987)

"Given a dramatist totally unafraid to venture, and a suitably loyal and fearless actor, twinning usually succeeds, as it does now: so surely indeed that towards the end of the night I could not swear which of the brothers we were seeing." (*Lady*, London, August 13, 1987)

"Afficionados of Dr. Who--and others--will not be disappointed with double doses of Colin Baker, playing those redoubtable twins, stinking rich Rupert and out-of-work actor Evelyn. Indeed, Baker, whenever he's on stage, which is most of the evening, fills it to capacity with his richly over the top performance, particularly as Evelyn. As Rupert he is amusing, but as the seedy--and kinky--actor he is inspired." (*STAGE*, July 30, 1987)

Debits and Credits

The promised list of Colin's professional credits is 'in the works' and should be ready in time for the next issue. Considering that Colin has reportedly been out of work for only six weeks in his almost twenty years of professional acting, there's quite a bit of information to pull together!

Charities Gain as Colin Slims!

Now a mere shadow of his former self...

April 26th: In their Sunday color supplement the London newspaper *The Sun* included Colin among a group of nine celebrities they dubbed "The Fat Pack." Their write-up about Colin went like this: "DR. HUGE? At over 15 stone, actor Colin Baker is the BBC's heaviest ever Time Lord. Now he's quit playing Dr. Who, Colin can either eat everything in the galaxy and join the Roly Polys, or turn back his personal time clock to the regular exercise and sensible diet he had in his pre-Dr. Who days...for he was once a very sexy, and very slim, young actor!" (Anyone who has seen Colin in *War and Peace* or *The Brothers* will know that *The Sun* wasn't exaggerating!)

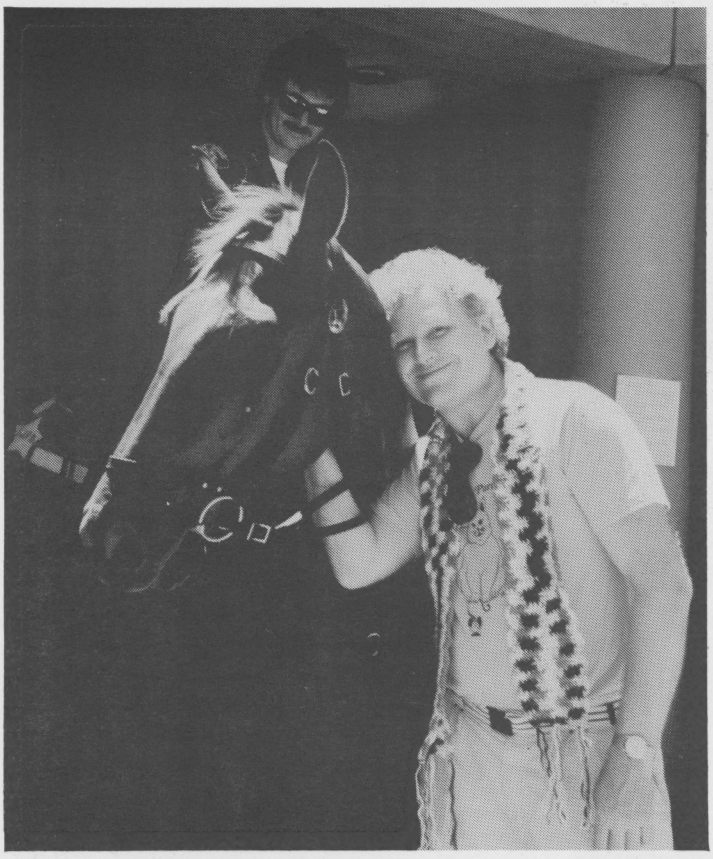
July 9th: *The Sun* reported that after seeing the above article Colin phoned them and suggested they sponsor him on a diet, and that he subsequently accepted their challenge to lose 40 pounds to get down to his desired weight of 13 stone (182 pounds). For each pound he lost, the newspaper would donate £100 to Colin's favorite charities: cot death research and the Aylesbury Wildlife Hospital. That's £4,000--more than $6,000--but according to the terms of the challenge, *The Sun* won't have to pay up unless Colin reaches his target weight!

August 7th: A follow-up article in *The Sun* reported that Colin had lost a stone (14 lbs.).

September 20th: Colin reports having lost *35 pounds!* He has almost reached his goal... and Americans are returning from London gasping, "He's...he's...*gorgeous!*"

By the time you read this Colin will probably have attained his goal...but in case he hasn't quite reached it yet, everyone please cross your fingers for him. As many of us know from experience, shedding those last few pounds can be torture!

Colin: if you're not quite to your goal, good luck. If you've reached it -- congratulations!!!



© 1987 Laurie Yadon (Timecon '87)

A San Jose Mounted Police officer dropped by Timecon to check out the action! Colin says he likes horses and enjoys riding a friend's horses when he gets the chance.

Horsing Around at Timecon '87

Approximately 2900 fans attended the fourth annual Timecon, which was held in San Jose July 31-August 2. Colin did six talks (two each day), including a panel with Mark Lenard and another with Majel Barrett and Mark. During Colin's solo talk on Saturday he was surprised with a slightly-belated birthday celebration and presented with a lavender t-shirt bearing a fat, sassy cat and the words, 'I've Aged To Purrfection.' Otherwise he did the usual things: judged the costume contest, toured the Dealers' Room, and signed *lots* of autographs!

During his talk sessions Colin updated us regarding his cats. "Do I really have five cats? The answer to that is no; I have been lying to you. I have seven cats!" "We were told by the farmer friend whose cat had the litter that [our three new kittens] were all girls. We wanted girl cats because they tend to be a little kinder to your upholstery than boy cats, right? But when we took them to the vet to have their injections a couple of weeks ago they said, 'These are three nice little boys you've got here!' Thank God we gave them names which are applicable to either! They're called Mog -- he's a kind of long-haired tabby -- and two identical black ones are called Rover (good name for a cat, isn't it, Rover?) and Sooty. Mog was christened by Lucy, my little daughter; I named Rover [after the Austin Rover automobile, Colin had explained previously]; and Marion chose Sooty because she had a cat years ago called Sooty. And they go 'round the place like a little storm -- up curtains and out of windows, causing havoc...."

The following poster was recently spotted at San Jose's Valley Fair Shopping Center:

REWARD

OFFERED FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO THE IDENTIFICATION OF A CRAZED SHOPPER WHO TERRORIZED THESE PREMISES ON JULY 31ST.

EYEWITNESSES REPORT THAT DURING A WHIRLWIND RAMPAGE THROUGH THIS MALL A CURLY-HAIRED ENGLISHMAN DEMONSTRATED SPECTACULAR BROKEN-FIELD RUNNING WHICH ENDANGERED THE LIVES (OR AT LEAST THE SANITY) OF INNOCENT BYSTANDERS AS WELL AS HIS OWN BEWILDERED COMPANIONS.

PLEASE CONTACT US IF YOU HAVE INFORMATION REGARDING THE IDENTITY OF THIS INDIVIDUAL. WE BELIEVE HE WOULD BE IDEALLY SUITED TO PLAY THE LEAD ROLE ("THE MAD MALLER") IN OUR NEW FILM, *SHOPPING MALL MASSACRE.*

LOLLAPALLOOZA STUDIOS

© 1987 W. Marc Ricketts (Timecon '87)

Now 'Ear This . . .

Recently a few of us commented that we hoped Colin would someday record some commercial audio tapes such as Tom has done, because we felt he would be equally good at it. Lo and behold, we've just discovered that Colin has *already* made two such recordings!

The first tape, *Pinocchio*, was recorded sometime last year. Colin isn't sure whether it can still be purchased, but we'll try to find out.

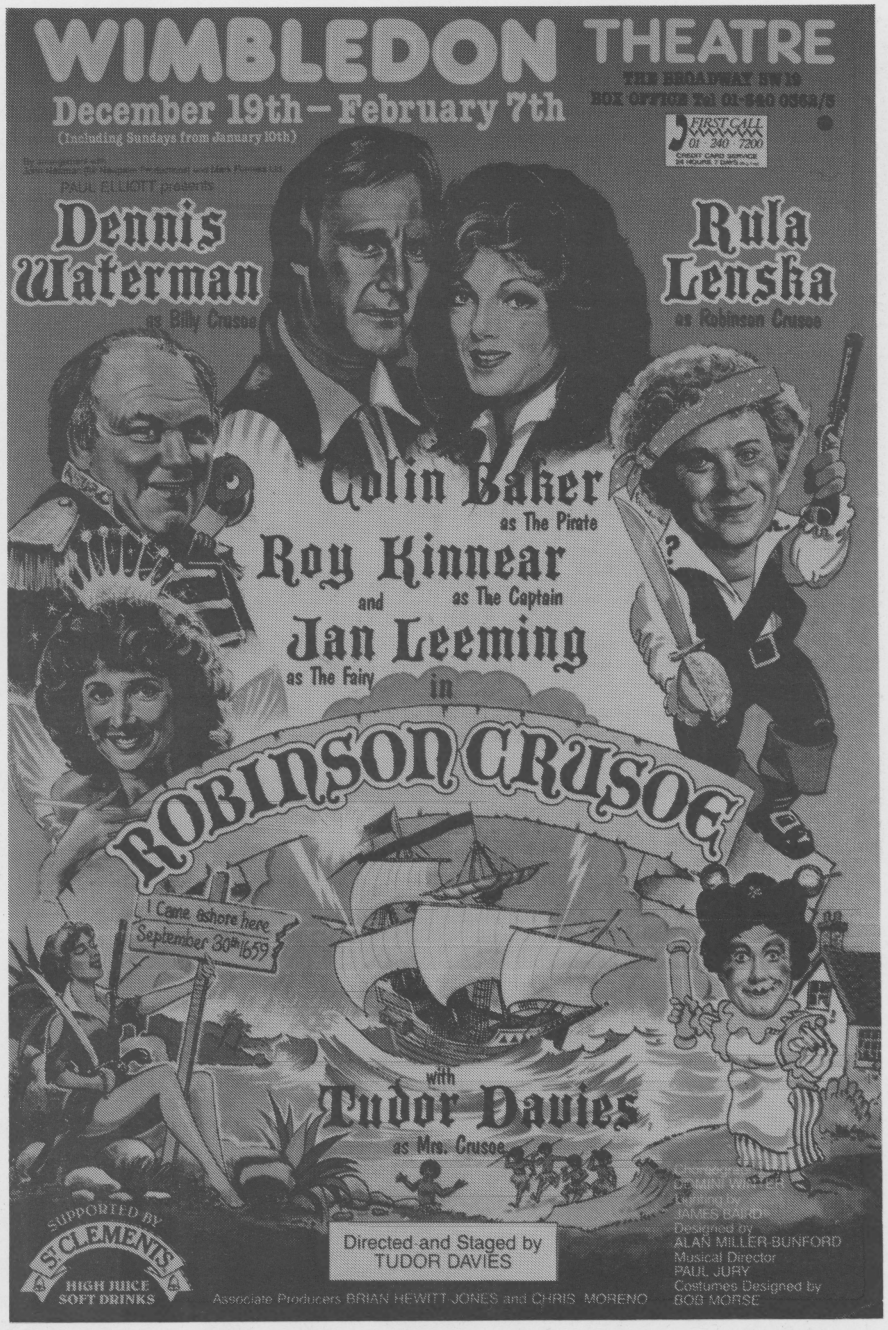
On July 17th of this year Colin recorded *Spooky Stories from Troller's Gill* for the Children's Book Club. It's a delightful tale about a tribe of two-foot-high Norwegian trolls who 700 years ago were mistakenly relocated to a remote, rocky valley in Yorkshire as a result of weather control experiments conducted by Merlin. When the trolls arrived in the valley they found the words 'Roger was ere' carved into a rock, and for 700 years they faithfully guarded the valley while waiting for its ruler, the mysterious Roger Wasere, to return and take them all back to Norway. Then an eight-year-old boy named Roger ignored a signpost marked 'Don't go this way' while out riding his bicycle, and embarked upon quite an adventure! This tape isn't available yet, but in our next issue we hope to be able to tell you how to obtain copies. We can't wait to hear it!

The Big Six

Last time we told you that the BBC program *Swallows and Amazons Forever! Coot Club* would air on the Disney Channel. Since then the last half of the series, entitled *Swallows and Amazons Forever! The Big Six*, has also aired. Colin continued his role as Dr. Dudgeon, the father of one of the story's young heroes, and Pat Troughton appeared as an eel fisherman. To the best of our knowledge, the Disney Channel has no plans to repeat these shows in the near future.

Grab Your Dictionaries . . .

Colin once appeared on a British TV game show called *Cross Wits*, and on September 27th he'll tape three more *Cross Wits* programs.



PANTO! As reported in our last issue, Colin will be playing The Pirate in the pantomime *Robinson Crusoe* this Christmas.

Back on the BBC!

On July 15th, the day after *Corpse!* opened in the West End, Colin taped a sketch for the BBC's *Kenny Everett Show*. He played Frankenstein's monster (who in this case goes by the name of Norman), complete with all the classic make-up. ("Great make-up...if you know who I am you can kind of just work me out.")

The setting is a party celebrating Norman's first "birthday." As Colin described it during Timecon, Dr. Frankenstein and Igor explain to him that "they're not my mummy and daddy." Colin's part consists largely of clumping around, bumping into things, grunting and roaring a lot, but he does have a few actual "speaking" lines as well!

This sketch should air on the BBC sometime this fall.